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DEPT FOR ISN/NESS, ISN/RA, NEA/ARP

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TAGS: [KNNP](#) [ENRG](#) [PARM](#) [PREL](#) [AE](#)

SUBJECT: U.S. ENGAGEMENT WITH MIDDLE EAST STATES ON NUCLEAR
ENERGY COOPERATION

REF: A. SECSTATE 8175

[B](#). ABU DHABI 120

[C](#). ABU DHABI 45

Classified By: Martin Quinn, Charge d'Affaires a.i., for reasons 1.4 (b
& d).

[1](#)1. (C) Post appreciates the opportunity to provide input on planned U.S. engagement with select countries in the Middle East that have expressed a serious interest in developing a peaceful nuclear power program. We agree that an early positive engagement is key to both demonstrating that countries can develop peaceful nuclear power in a way that does not increase a proliferation risk and to opening the door for U.S. companies to participate.

[1](#)2. (C) In the specific case of the UAE, the leadership appears to be committed to evaluating the need for nuclear power then moving quickly to implement decisions. The proposal to bring initial reactors on line by 2017 is ambitious. Although the UAE has committed its participation and support to the ongoing GCC initiatives toward peaceful nuclear energy, it is clear that the UAE does not intend to let the GCC slow it down. Rather, the UAE plans to have its program serve as a model for the GCC. It appears, therefore, that we will need to deal with the UAE on a bilateral basis, whatever our interaction with the GCC as an organization.

[1](#)3. (C) The key driver behind this program for the UAE is clearly the Emirate of Abu Dhabi rather than the UAE federal government. Specifically, Abu Dhabi Crown Prince (and Deputy Supreme Commander of the UAE Armed Forces) Sheikh Mohammed bin Zayed Al-Nahyan appears to be the driving force. The organization pushing forward development of laws and regulations and funding the studies is the Emirate of Abu Dhabi's Executive Affairs Authority (EAA). The EAA is a kind of think tank for the Chairman of the Abu Dhabi Executive Council, the same Sheikh Mohammed bin Zayed Al-Nahyan. The Ministries of Foreign Affairs and Energy are being brought into the process. Even so, the MFA's coordinator for peaceful nuclear cooperation is Hamad Al-Kaabi, an EAA employee. The General Counsel of the EAA is taking the lead for drafting the UAE's nuclear regulatory law (ref b).

[1](#)4. (C) Post proposes the following engagement process with the UAE:

-- High Level Visits. Both POTUS and Secretary Bodman have expressed general support for the UAE's proposed development of nuclear power. Post believes that the high-level message has been passed. The need is to follow through on expert

level discussions and practical issues. The upcoming proposed Counter-proliferation Task Force (CTF) meeting in late February will give us another opportunity to reiterate the USG commitment.

-- Provide Comments on the UAE's draft white paper. In accordance with ref A, post has informed the EAA that the paper was very well received and that comments will be provided. The UAE is eagerly awaiting these comments and has promised to take timely suggestions into consideration. The earlier, we can provide constructive comments, the better our chance will be to shape the discussion. The UAE, after all, wants to go public with its white paper in February.

-- The UAE has proposed sending a delegation to the U.S. in the February 6-8 time frame. If at all possible, we should accommodate this delegation. Ideally, post would have an opportunity to provide comments to the white paper before this visit to give the UAE delegation time to prepare for the discussion. At a minimum, however, we should be prepared to discuss the white paper in Washington.

-- Pursue GNEP and other bilateral agreements. This dialogue appears to be compatible with the UAE's objectives and could forward our goals as well.

-- Use the U.S. Embassy as the primary point of engagement with the UAE, especially until the UAE's policy is agreed on and adopted. This eases the logistical burden on the UAE and limits any potential confusion.

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